

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current
scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



A389.9
F76

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
LIBRARY



BOOK NUMBER
912932

A389.9
F76

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Foreign Agricultural Service
Washington 25, D. C.

October 1, 1955

FACT SHEET

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE FOOD AND
AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Progress toward improving world food and agriculture will be reviewed and evaluated October 14-16 at the 10th anniversary commemoration of the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

The FAO anniversary, or Decennial, will be held at the Chateau Frontenac, Quebec, Canada. Participating in the observance will be agricultural officials of the U. S. and Canada, and the FAO North American Regional Office, located at Washington, D. C. The Quebec site for the ceremonies was chosen because FAO's organizing conference was held there on October 16, 1945.

Saturday, October 15, will be devoted to discussions on the world situation and on FAO's work in nutrition and home economics, fisheries, forestry, economics, and agriculture. Panel members and leaders will be Canadian and U. S. experts in these fields of FAO interest. Earl L. Butz, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture and Chairman of the U. S. FAO Interagency Committee, will head a group of representatives from the U. S. Departments of Agriculture, State, and Interior. Philip V. Cardon, Director-General of FAO, is expected to attend. Dr. Cardon is the former head of USDA agricultural research.

Soon after midnight, in the first few minutes of October 16, James G. Gardiner, Canadian Minister of Agriculture, will present a bronze plaque which will be placed in the Chateau Frontenac to commemorate FAO's founding at Quebec.

Brief History of FAO

In May 1943, when much of the world was at war, representatives of governments of 45 countries met at Hot Springs, Virginia, to seek ways to banish hunger and establish a stable world agriculture. It had occurred to a few people that international cooperation might be kept alive if it was centered around some urgent

practical matters outside the realm of international politics -- such problems as how to apply modern agricultural science more widely to produce more and better food for human beings, how to apply modern nutrition so people would have better food and better health, how to raise living standards and conditions of rural people, and thus contribute to a more prosperous and peaceful world.

Since at that time food was one of the world's greatest problems, it was only natural that these representatives decided to create a world-wide organization that would work toward adequate food supplies for the global populations.

From this nucleus meeting at Hot Springs an organization developed that was formally established in Quebec in 1945 and was named the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations -- the first of the new permanent agencies born from the wartime partnership of the Allies. Sir John Boyd Orr, nutritionist, and founder and head of the Rowett Research Institute, Aberdeen, Scotland, was elected first Director-General of FAO. The motto "Fiat Panis" (Let There Be Bread) was adopted.

Forty-two nations joined FAO at its founding conference in Quebec. This number has grown until now 71 nations are members. They are:

Afghanistan	Greece	Norway
Argentina	Guatemala	Pakistan
Australia	Haiti	Panama
Austria	Honduras	Paraguay
Belgium	Iceland	Peru
Bolivia	India	Philippine Republic
Brazil	Indonesia	Portugal
Burma	Iran	Saudi Arabia
Cambodia	Iraq	Spain
Canada	Ireland	Sweden
Ceylon	Israel	Switzerland
Chile	Italy	Syria
Costa Rica	Japan	Thailand
Colombia	Jordan	Turkey
Cuba	Korea	Union of South Africa
Denmark	Laos	United Kingdom
Dominican Republic	Lebanon	United Kingdom of Libya
Ecuador	Liberia	United States of America
Egypt	Luxembourg	Uruguay
El Salvador	Mexico	Venezuela
Ethiopia	Nepal	Viet-Nam
Finland	Netherlands	Yemen
France	New Zealand	Yugoslavia
Germany	Nicaragua	

Objectives of FAO

Under FAO's Constitution, member nations are pledged to carry out the following objectives:

1. To raise the levels of nutrition and standards of living of the peoples of their country and the world.

912082

2. To secure improvements in the efficiency of production and distribution of all food and agricultural products.
3. To better the condition of rural populations.
4. To contribute toward an expanding economy.

What FAO Does

To achieve these objectives, FAO's activities are centered mainly in three fields: (1) Collect, analyze, and disseminate information; (2) furnish technical assistance; and (3) promote needed national and international action.

A world food survey in 1946 was one of the first jobs completed by FAO. This survey demonstrated the value of collecting basic data on just how much food different peoples are getting and how that amount compares with their need. The FAO survey indicated that more than half the world's peoples did not have enough food to maintain normal health prior to World War II. FAO has continued to make annual reports on the world food and agricultural situation.

When a member country requests technical assistance from FAO on its particular problems, FAO can send one or more qualified individuals to work with scientists and technicians of the country. FAO now employs several hundred specialists in virtually every phase of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries and has them working in many parts of the world.

FAO promotes and coordinates international action in many ways. Greece set up a national nutrition service on FAO's recommendation. The locust problem in several Central American countries and the Middle East has been minimized through a cooperative program in which FAO has assisted. The organization rendered a valuable service here by helping to muster concerted cooperation among adjoining countries invaded by the locust -- an insect that recognizes no physical borders.

Many international commissions and study groups have been established through the aid and encouragement of FAO. An example is the International Rice Commission, whose purpose is to raise production and consumption levels in rice-eating countries. In recent years, FAO has studied the appearance of surpluses of certain crops in several countries. After the 1953 FAO conference it created a committee specifically to work toward an orderly solution of these problems. This committee, made up of representatives of 21 member governments, including the U. S., periodically meets to discuss possible solutions to the surplus commodity situation.

FAO and UN

FAO is a specialized agency of the United Nations system, i.e., an organizational entity separate from the UN, and with its own constitution and governing body made up of member nations. FAO operates, however, under an agreement with UN to work cooperatively toward common objectives. Some member governments of FAO are not members of UN and vice-versa. The aim of this arrangement is to make possible the concentration of technical knowledge on world agricultural problems, and at the same time to provide joint action on mutual international problems.

Ten Years of World Agriculture

FAO, in reviewing agricultural development of the past decade, says that world agricultural production was more than 25 percent greater in 1954 than in 1946-47 (excluding the Communistic bloc). The world is now producing about 20 percent more rice, milk, and cotton than before the war, about 30 percent more wheat, fats, and meat, 50 percent more fruit and sugar, and 80 percent more natural rubber.

World fisheries production, seriously reduced during the war because of loss of fishing boats, has increased 20 percent over pre-war figures. Overall, at war's end, FAO estimated that world agricultural production was down five percent and world population was up 10 percent over pre-war levels, with a consequent per-capita fall in production of about 15 percent. By 1954 this lag had been overtaken, however, and in some countries surpluses were beginning to develop in wheat, sugar, and cotton.

In fact, the changing picture of world trade has been rather striking. Up to 1952, North American food exports were 3-4 times as much as before the war, but at that point they began to decline. On the other hand, food exports from the Far East are still less than half the pre-war volume. European food imports, once high, have settled down to about 10 percent lower than before the war. Latin American food imports, although they have increased sharply, remain relatively small.

Slowness in world trade of agricultural products, says FAO, arises largely from the drive for greater self-sufficiency. This drive leads to the preference of imports of capital goods rather than consumer goods. Some obstacles to trade could be reduced, says FAO, with the relaxation of world tension and the easing of international payment difficulties.



